

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 11-23 are pending in this application. Claims 11-16, 18, 20, 22, and 23 stand rejected, and claim 7, 19, and 20 are withdrawn from consideration. In light of the remarks set forth below, Applicant respectfully submits that each of the pending claims is in condition for immediate allowance.

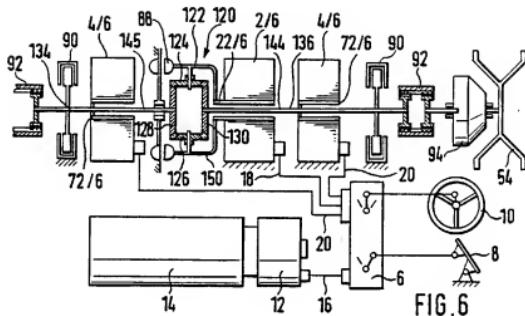
Claims 11, 12, 14-16, 18, 22, and 23 stand rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,998,591 (“Zaunberger”) in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,645,351 (“Muller”). Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection.

Among the limitations of independent claim 11 not present in the cited combination is “at least two energy sources which can be operated independently of one another, each of *said energy sources providing electric current to said traction drive and said electric steering drive.*”

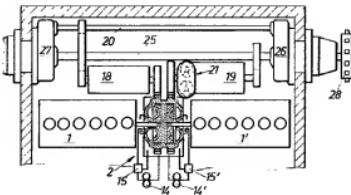
Applicant notes that in a track vehicle, as the drive system fails, the vehicle should be drivable and steerable, even with partial damage to the drive system in order to move itself, for example, out of a danger zone under its own power or with reduced drive power. (Application as filed, paragraph [0003]). The pending claims explicitly recite that the electric steering drive system includes at least two energy sources which can be operated independently of one another with said energy sources each providing electric current to said traction drive and said electric steering drive.

The Office Action acknowledges that the Zaunberger lacks two energy sources. As shown in Figure 6 of Zaunberger reproduced below, there is a single motor 14 and a single generator 12. The Examiner then includes Muller for “the use of two engines as separately controllable energy sources for a powered tracked vehicle drive and steering arrangements”. (Office Action at p. 2, par. 3). Applicant submits that Muller fails to disclose the *entire* limitation for which it is cited.

Specifically, Muller is silent with respect to “*providing electric current to said traction drive and said electric steering drive.*”



Muller discloses a dual-engine vehicle. Specifically, Muller discloses a pair of equal internal combustion engines (ICEs) 1, 1'. (Muller at col. 2, ll. 33-35). As shown in Fig. 1 of Muller reproduced below, the ICEs 1, 1' are connected to the drive and the steering mechanism to manually drive these systems. Each internal combustion engine 1, 1' provides mechanical power via the hydrodynamic coupling 2. Power is taken from the coupling 2 via housing 8 to drive a gear 16 that drives steering mechanism 18 and a gear 17 that drives torque converter 21 and transmission 19 of the vehicle. (Muller at col. 2, ll. 65-69). Nothing in Muller relates to electric power and electric drive components. The cited combination fails to disclose, “*two energy sources which can be operated independently of one another, each of said energy sources providing electric current to said traction drive and said electric steering drive.*” Thus, for at least this reason the cited combination fails to render independent claim 11 unpatentable.



Muller FIG. 1

Applicant notes that one skilled in the art would find no suggestion to apply the teaching of Muller to electric drives or electric generators. In fact, if one were to combine Zaunberger and Muller, the result would be Zaunberger's engine 14 replaced by ICEs 1, 1` that can be engaged as required via coupling 2 to generator 12 so that power is always provided to generator 12 if there is an excessive power demand or provide backup if one of the motors fails. However, even if there were two ICEs 1, 1`, they would still be coupled via coupling 2 to a single generator 12. Thus, in addition to not disclosing that each of the two energy sources can be operated independently of one another and providing electric current to said traction drive and said electric steering drive, there is no disclosure that the two ICEs in Muller can be used for any other purpose than simultaneously powering the vehicle.

For at least these reasons, claims 11, 12, 14-16, 18, 22, and 23 are allowable over the combination of the combination of Zaunberger and Muller.

Claims 13 and 20 stand rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Zaunberger and Muller in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,917,200 ("Lucius"). Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection.

Lucius was not added to cure the deficiency of the primary combination discussed above but to show additional limitations which, even if it was to show, do not cure the deficiencies discussed above. As such, claims 13 and 20 are deemed to be allowable over the cited combination.

It is believed that no fees or charges are required at this time in connection with the present application. However, if any fees or charges are required at this time, they may be charged to our Patent and Trademark Office Deposit Account No. 03-2412.

Respectfully submitted,
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